

BLAME CONGRESS FOR THE HIGH
PRICE OF OIL**HON. TED POE**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 3, 2008

Mr. POE. Madam Speaker, gasoline prices are soaring. The problem rests on the well-known principle of supply and demand. Our domestic energy supply cannot meet our demand. The solution is to increase our supply by exploring domestic energy sources and allowing drilling in ANWAR.

The problem is even worse when you consider that as more countries industrialize, especially India and China, there will be more demand for the same amount of oil. The result? Even higher gas prices.

While it is easy to point fingers and blame American oil companies, the real culprit is Congress. Congress is responsible because it decided to subsidize special interest groups, energy companies which may produce expensive and unreliable energy someday. Congress placed our future in the hands of unproven energy sources.

Instead of supporting those companies that provide our energy today, Congress punished them with high taxes. But Congress was sure to exempt Venezuelan oil company, CITGO, from these high taxes.

Gas companies have reported record profits in recent years, but these profits resulted in record high tax collection. Two months ago, Exxon-Mobil announced record profits of \$40.7 billion, but they paid nearly \$30 billion in taxes. Their high profits are due to the increasing demand for oil by American and global consumers. And this demand isn't going to change. Also these profits go to shareholders—the thousands of Americans that own stock in oil companies. By punishing oil companies, Congress is hurting the average American who owns a little stock in oil companies.

The United States is the only industrial power in the world that does not take advantage of its own energy resources. We must drill in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and the Outer Continental Shelf. Our gas prices will fall if we are able to increase our domestic supply of oil.

Federal government restrictions are burdening the American consumer and private business. These restrictions have put a halt on building new oil refineries. In fact, it's been 32 years since the last US oil refinery was built in Garyville, Louisiana. These unnecessary restrictions and taxes are driving companies to move off shore where restrictions and taxes are less.

Congress must lift the unnecessary regulations on off-shore drilling. If Congress doesn't lift these restrictions, the American consumer will continue paying high prices for gas and the United States will remain dependent on 3rd world nations and Dictator Chavez.

And that's just the way it is.

TRIBUTE TO BILLIE JEAN
OSBORNE**HON. HAROLD ROGERS**

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 3, 2008

Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky. Madam Speaker, the reason our region in Kentucky moves forward is because people stand up to be counted. They have passion for their community, believe in others, and have a can-do spirit to get things done. They radiate optimism wherever they go and spread it to others, and it catches fire in the communities in which they live. These people are priceless—their passion makes them natural leaders.

One such person is Billie Jean Osborne. Because of her, young people in eastern Kentucky learned something that is as vitally important as it is elusive—self-confidence. The Kentucky Opry Junior Pros, who range in age from elementary school to college-aged students, perform live shows for up to 1000 people throughout the year. She gives them a musical education and they put that on display for the whole community.

She did more than give young kids self-confidence. Billie Jean is the driving force that led to the creation of the Mountain Arts Center in which they perform. Because of this facility, grandparents, parents, friends and neighbors can see the talents of these young performers.

Billie Jean approached many people about building this center in 1992. She talked to anyone who would listen about this idea and many said "this is great; call us when you're ready." It turns out she was ready, and made a lot of us ready as well and we got it built 5 years later. Communities large and small need a focal point. Whether it is the St. Louis arch or the Washington Monument, these landmarks define communities by the history and heritage they represent.

In this region that heritage involves country, bluegrass and gospel where folks learned to play guitars, banjos and sing from their parents and grandparents. But for many smaller communities there isn't such a landmark or even a place nearby large enough where very many people can congregate. Thanks to Billie Jean we have both. It is the Mountain Art Center, or simply "the MAC" and it is the pride of Prestonsburg.

Her life experience led to the establishment of the Kentucky Opry nearly 20 years ago for older musicians. Many Junior Opry members later go on to join the Kentucky Opry. A school teacher for 30 years, Billie Jean still provides area schools with supplemental music education programs. She educates thousands of children with private music lessons, plays the organ at her Church, where she's been a member for nearly half a century, and started a music education program at the MAC at no cost to the students.

She will be honored at the MAC on April 12. Her students spanning generations, current and former members of the Kentucky Opry and Jr. Opry and people throughout the region will be there. They will be there because Billie Jean Osborne showed us how to take what is in us and put it on a stage.

I am proud to know her and pay tribute to her in the United States Congress.

ON THE PASSING OF HARRY
McDONALD**HON. JEFF MILLER**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 3, 2008

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Madam Speaker, it is with great sadness that I rise today to recognize the passing of Harry Ryan "Mack" McDonald, Jr. Mack was a patriot who over the course of many years put his country before himself.

Born on August 8, 1928, in Pensacola in my district in northwest Florida, Mack enjoyed an extensive career with both the United States Navy and Army. Over two decades of service saw him rise from his first enlistment to the rank of first sergeant and later retire at the rank of captain. Through those years he defended our Nation's liberty in World War II, the Korean war, and the Vietnam war. Mack's bravery in combat earned him, among other honors, both the Bronze Star Medal and the Combat Infantry Badge.

After his retirement, Mack returned to northwest Florida, the area of the country where he had grown up and still wanted to call home. After building a house in the city of Crestview, Mack wanted to continue to be engaged with our Armed Forces and joined the Disabled American Veterans, DAV, Crestview Chapter 57. His love of service to his country showed in his involvement with DAV, and he served in many positions. Mack went on to become a chapter commander, a district commander, and a State commander. This is no small task given the number of veterans that choose to call the State of Florida their home.

From 1997 to 1998, Mack served as the national commander for the Disabled American Veterans. There is no doubt that Mack was the right man for this monumental job. He served as the main advocate for over a million veterans throughout the nation. In this position, Mack traveled the Nation learning the needs of disabled veterans and came before Congress and the Department of Veterans Affairs to explain and press for improved services for those veterans.

My condolences go out to Mack's wife Merallyn, their family, and all others who mourn the loss of this great servant to our Nation. America is a better, safer place because of him and those many others who served in our Armed Forces. He loved his country and his family deeply, and his loss will have a vast impact on many.

Madam Speaker, on behalf of the United States Congress, it is with no small amount of sorrow that I tell of the passing of Mack McDonald from this world, and his family is in my thoughts and prayers.

TRIBUTE TO COACH CREAN

HON. BARON P. HILL

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 3, 2008

Mr. HILL. Madam Speaker, on April 2, 2008, Tom Crean was named the 28th head basketball coach at Indiana University. I wish to congratulate Coach Crean and welcome him to Indiana's 9th Congressional District.